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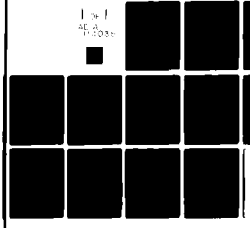

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Police officer productivity in American police agencies is examined in terms of how it is influenced through the efforts of first-line supervision. Drawing on participant-observation data, police sergeants are influential in directing the efforts of their police officer subordinates by virtue of their use of (1) small favors; (2) disciplinary protection; and (3) symbolic (and behavioral) legitimation. Implications are drawn in light of current police management practices.

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The Mobilization of Effort: Sergeants, Patrol Officers, and Productivity in American Police Departments[1]

John Van Maanen

Discussions of productivity in work organizations are marked by what often seems to be an obsession with individual motivation. That effort and productivity go together is both a lay and social scientific premise. The premise itself leads to research into the individual psychology of workers and bosses. Behavior is seen as a consequence of some inner state associated with the prepotency of certain individually held goals to direct personal activities. Whether we look to expectancy theory, equity theory, or dissonance theory, the assumption of individual motivation is key. Calculating, planful, intentional behavior in the service of some goal or set of goals undergirds virtually all contemporary theories of individual behavior in work organizations. When considering how effort is mobilized, the analyst assumes some sort of connection between the rewards presumed available in organizational contexts and the beliefs, values, needs, or desires reported by the people that populate such contexts. The logic is both commonsensical and mechanical: People will work hard on tasks they believe will bring them valued rewards.[2]

Without questioning the logic or assumptions of such an approach to productivity, I want to suggest in this paper that another approach is possible and perhaps equally insightful as to the bases of human behavior in work organizations. In brief, the idea is to look toward a particular organizational product or result and then search for the various social practices that contribute to such a product or result. The metaphors illuminating behavior switch from motive and choice, to result and procedure. The idea is to work backward from

from observed consequences to the set of activities that generate a given consequence. The approach forces the analyst to look away from personalized perceptions of work environments toward social or shared perceptions; away from individual motives as determinants of behavior to the range of culturally (or subculturally) approved procedures within which individual behavior must be alligned. Several key assumptions are involved with such an approach.[3]

First, behavior in organizations must be viewed as essentially arbitrary in meaning. This is merely to say that behavior is a way of speaking (both literally in terms of speech acts and figuratively in terms of conventionalized meaning systems). Behavior is observed and because it is observed it means something to the observer. To know what it means is to possess a scheme or code to translate the activities that constitute the behavior into a particular system of relevancies. These systems of relevancies or meanings comprise the coding scheme involved in organizational life and there are many such schemes within any given organization. To study a social practice in an organization (e.g., performance appraisals, dismissals, ticketing procedures) necessitates coming to terms with the various codes which translate a given practice into a meaningful event (or ritual) for those within the organization. A ticket written by a patrolman is essentially arbitrary in its meaning until a specific code is applied to the ticket such that it can be seen as, for example, a productivity index by management, a make-work folkway by patrol officers, a dutiful display of commitment by traffic officers, or a penetrating instance of the coercive power of the state by a motorist or a sociologist. All this is merely to say that there is nothing inherently meaningful about the ticket before a particular code of relevance is applied. To study a given social practice in an organization is then to also study the various codes that give meaning to such a practice.

Second, the codes which give meaning to behavior are cultural products and are not reducable to psychological states such as individual beliefs, values or emotions. By cultural, I mean simply that the codes are learned, shared,

and deal with behavior that can be labelled as proper or improper from a member's perspective. There is of course nothing fixed nor necessarily timeless about such codes; they are shifting, negotiable, and often continually problematic to both the outside analyst and inside user. Tickets issued during periodic ticketing campaigns engaged in by police agencies are, for example, less ambiguous to organizational members than are tickets issued during periods of less programmatic concern.

Third, the degree to which codes are made use of by a significant portion of organizational members is variable. The same behavior may be read by different organizational members in similar or dissimilar ways. The interests of members form around hierarchical levels, task specializations, age, ethnic backgrounds, career possibilities, current difficulties, disciplinary vulnerabilities, leisure pursuits, family concerns, past experiences, and so forth. To the degree such interests coalesce, segments or factions of the organization become visible and periodic to continual conflict among segments results as to how a given practice or behavior is to be read.

Fourth, coding schemes developed by outsiders as to the meaning of certain social practices inside an organization are unlikely to match the various schemes of insiders. Behavior is in this sense multivocal. It can mean many things. To select productivity as a focus for investigation is to also select from among alternatives. Such selection is based upon a special sensitivity as to what is and what is not important. It is also to allign oneself with segments within organization who may have similar priorities. To impose a meaning on productivity follows the same course. Tickets can be read as an index of productivity or as an index of wasted effort depending upon the code one chooses to assign to the practice.

All this is to suggest that if one chooses to examine productivity from a social practice perspective rather than from an individual motivation point of view, great care must be exercised when defining behavior. Equal care must

be exercised in pointing to whose definitions or codes are to be ultilized. And, finally, conflict over such meanings must be expected although the origins and implications of such conflict are diverse and often hidden by reconstructed histories. One must keep in mind that meanings are tied to the activities of people. They are not neutral but are, ultimately, practical in uses to which they can be put.[4] As a way of demonstrating this approach to the study of productivity, the following ethnographic materials on "police productivity" are presented.

Context[5]

Productivity is a term used infrequently by police officials. A good part of this apparent reluctance is related to the societal role the police play as, in Manning's (1981) phrase, presumed dispensers of collective goods. Unlike consumer or private consumption goods and services in which supply and demand can be more or less determined (and manipulated), collective goods are, in theory, to be made generally available to all citizens of the state and not distributed on the basis of individual preferences or resources.[6] In other words, no citizen can be excluded officially from receiving the benefits of policing whether they desire such benefits or not. This formal mandate creates an irresolvable operational problem for the police because demand is virtually unlimited (Wilson, 1968; Reiss, 1971; Manning, 1980, 1981). The police are in the uncomfortable position of being overcommited in the sense that they can not meet all the demands for policing and yet can not refuse demand. To resolve this paradox, the police have chosen to regulate demand privately through discretionary decisions made at various levels and locations within the organization (e.g., by street-level officers, by detectives, by communication center personnel, by police administrators, etc.). At the same time, the police publicly disclaim such discretion (or, at least, proclaim that such discretion is not capricious, strategic or personal). Open consideration of police productivity would necessarily reveal discretionary patterns, targets, and

origins thus mocking police claims that the services they provide are, in fact, collective goods distributed to all.

In consequence, the police present their operational tasks in ambiguous, dramatic, and highly generalized ways. Indeed, police administrators insist that what they produce must be seen as "law enforcement," "community service," "keeping the peace," "citizen protection," and so on. Such products can not be easily or sharply measured. The police emerge on the basis of these broad claims as an agency empowered by the state to apply force in virtually any situation. In Bittner's (1974:30) precise words, "no problems exists, or is imaginable, about which it could be said with finality that this certainly could not become the proper business of the police." Moreover, because demand is of enormous variety and is met on primarily an incident-specific basis, the social practices developed by the police to handle such demand reflect a substantial rather than formal rationality -- a rationality which is marked, in Weber's sense, by an acute sensitivity to immediate and concrete circumstances. Thus, what the police accomplish, even in the most generalized of descriptions, varies temporally, spatially, socially, and individually (Manning, 1979). And, most importantly, such variance is regarded by the police as not only proper but as the single, unavoidable constant of police work (Van Maanen, 1974, 1980). As Manning (1981) rightfully points out, neither law nor social norms can define the police role. Police productivity then has no obvious referent beyond the meeting of demand as shaped and defined by members of the organization itself.

This is not to deny that their are social meanings and uses for the term productivity within police agencies. I mean merely that these meanings and uses are flexible, varied, and, to a large degree, patterned by the social organization of police work. To worry about what productivity means to those in the organization is to first examine what it is certain groups within the organization do and then note the standards they apply to such doings in

order to assess their success. In light of the impossibility of imposing a definition for productivity upon the police, the analyst must investigate the meanings organizational members attribute to their actions and only then infer what such meanings and practices have to say about productivity as defined in terms of the membership or, as is sometimes the case, in terms of the outside observer.

Productivity and Police Work

Police work at the street level where somewhere between 70 and 85 percent of departmental personnel are located is based primarily on the activities of a squad.[7] General responsibility for and monitoring of the activities of squad members are given formally to a sergeant. Sociologically, there are two contrasting ways of viewing the activities of sergeants. One way is to regard what they do as a role comprised of a diverse set of more or less fixed functions for which they are held accountable. That is, the activities of sergeants are explained by the set of expectations held by higher officers in the department. An alternative and I think more useful view is to consider these expectations not as role requirements but as organizationally sanctioned resources from which sergeants may draw upon to direct and influence the work and sentiments of the men he is officially charged with supervising.[8] The differences between these two perspectives are subtle but meaningful. In the first view, the sergeant responds; in the second, the sergeant acts.

Several generalizations about a sergeant's work and his relationship with subordinates can be made on the basis of published research.[9] These generalizations set the stage for articulating how sergeants think about productivity and for examining the various social practices of sergeants instrumental in the pursuit of productivity however it may be defined.

1. The making of sergeants is a one-at-a-time (individual), loosely managed (informal), examination-based (competitive), uncertain (variable), status-enhancing (investiture) and non-sequential as to the prior assignments experienced by sergeants (random). Socialization theory predicts those

who move into new positions in such a way will perform them in highly divergent, creative, and idiosyncratic ways (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Police sergeants do not violate this prediction.

2. Police officers at the lowest hierarchical level in the organization work for a sergeant moreso than they can be said to work for anyone else within the organization (or, for that matter, the citizens outside the organization). The critical person in any police officers working life is his immediate sergeant who, in all respects, represents his boss and most significant audience. Police officers who do not get along with their sergeant pay a price.[10]

3. Relations between sergeants and their subordinates are intimate and intimately reciprocal. Aside from one's own partner, the sergeant usually knows more about a man, his peferences, his work performance, his mistakes, than anyone else in the department. From this standpoint, sergeants are as much colleagues of the men they supervise as they are superiors. Charged with supervising from five to 25 men of different temperments, different conceptions of police work, and different interests, a sergeant invariably tries to reduce the distance between himself and the men he supervises by personalizing his relationships with them.

4. Direct communication from the dispatch center of the organization to officers on the beat bypasses the sergeant. Although such communications are formally defined as "orders" in the chain of command, the paramilitary structure within which sergeants stand as direct supervisors to their men is best considered a bureaucracy in form only. Much of what squad members do, they do out of sight of their sergeant and do so, not at his command, but at the request of radio.

5. When sergeants believe discipline is necessary, it is typically based upon infractions of departmental or procedural matters, not legal or substantive ones. How an officer handles a particular police situation is not, unless it visibly and blatently violates the legal limits of police discretion, an issue for official discipline -- although harsh words, stringent advise, or oral reprimands may be offered. From the police officer's perspective, sergeants are overconcerned with dress, demeanor, protocol, paper, and, on occasion, personal character; they are underconcerned with what it is street officers consider the work of police work.

6. There is a high degree of mutual dependence standing behind the actions a sergeant may or may not take in regard to his men. He is dependent upon them to work smoothly, without causing untoward concern among the public or others in the department; and they are dependent upon him for permission to engage in certain activities, for small favors that are his to hand out, and for protection from the consequences of the mistakes they will (in good faith and bad) make. These ties are the subject of the following section and represent in large

measure how productivity at the squad level is directed by the sergeant.

Within this framework, sergeants develop working styles emphasizing some aspects of the police task and deemphasizing others. When productivity is talked about by sergeants (implicitly or explicitly), it is ordinarily discussed in terms of seeing to it that their charges: (1) respond to their radio calls with reasonable dispatch and courtesy; (2) cover their assigned beats between calls with a degree of commitment and attention to the "on-view" crime or need for service incident; (3) possess the "right mental attitude" toward the police function; and (4) comport themselves in a manner that does not come to the attention and irritate higher officials in the police agency or influential citizens in the community. Since demand for police work is unpredictable, episodic, situationally specific, and, in most cases, centrally dispatched and organized, the work of police officers is supervised mainly in indirect, review-like ways. Patrol sergeants in particular (the majority of police sergeants work in patrol) are therefore in the position of being able to consider productivity only after events have occured. To take action prospectively, is to attempt merely to mobilize resources in such a fashion that whatever contingencies arise, the squad will be able to adequately handle them. It is in this sense that productivity in police agencies revolves around the social practices sergeants adopt in attempting to mobilize the efforts of their subordinates.[11] Productivity to a sergeant means findings ways to direct the activities of the squad and increasing the likelihood that members of the squad will find it advantageous to perform in such a fashion.

The Mobilization of Effort: Social Practices of Sergeants

I have grouped the mobilization efforts of sergeants under three generic categories of action. Each category represents a somewhat distinct set of everyday activities engaged in by sergeants. These activities connect the expressive actions of sergeants (mobilization attempts) to the instrumental

actions of street officers (the direction, level, and intensity of street policing). The discussion is premised upon the introductory theme of this paper: To understand work results, the analyst must specify the organizational (social) practices that generate and provide the meaning of such results. For ease of example, I use the patrol division of police agencies as the primary (although not exclusive) organizational segment of interest.

Behavioral Licensing: The best way to capture the results of a sergeant's long and short term effects upon his subordinates is to put it in terms of the granting (and withholding) of behavioral license. Sergeants, above all else they may do, convey to their men a sense of what is possible and what is not. This is a sense of permission and it runs through all lines of police conduct. In some cases, permission is routinized and thus more or less predictable. In other cases, permission is highly uncertain and hence of constant and troubled concern to police officers. The former category involves much of the intra-organizationally directed activities including quotas, protocol, reporting relationships, and "padding" (false work claims). In most patrol squads, there exist well known limits about how long one can remain out-of-service on certain, relatively frequent calls -- traffic accidnets, burglary reports, alarm calls, family beefs, etc. These limits can of course be breached but not without acknowledgement of the limits and conventions themselves. Permission of a routinized sort also includes the kind of work a particular sergeant chooses to emphasize.

> "Now you take Sergeant Johnson. He was a drunk hunter. That guy wanted all the drunks off the street and you knew that if you brought in a couple of drunks a week, you and he would get along just fine. Sergeant Moss now is a different cat. He don't give a rat's ass about drunks. What he wants are those vice pinches. Sergeant Gordon wanted tickets and he'd hound your ass for a ticket a night. So you see it all depends on who you're working for. Each guy's a little different." [12]

On the other side of these urged and almost ritualized activities are

matters on which patrolmen are unsure of the response of their sergeants. These often reflect what Pike (1981) calls the "get 'em" theme of urban police work. This theme is frequently played out in the station house after an arrest has been made and the involved officers, along with their sergeant, attempt to construct the organizationally-relevant (defendable) charge(s) to be brought -- at least initially -- against the person arrested.

"Can I get 'em on a 219 Sarge?"

"How can I get 'em if I can't search their car?"

"What can we get this asshole on besides the stand-up?"

The sergeant plays a pivotal role in the arrest process, a role that is often invisible to outsiders since it is through sergeant attention to the kinds of arrests made by members of his squad that sets the charge limits themselves and fashions the kind of officer reports that eventually are filed (Van Maanen, 1974). Critically, squads vary on the sort of typical charges they cite in their arrest reports and this variance is in large measure a product of their sergeant's tutelage.

> "Joe and I brought Shakey Jim (their sergeant) this really solid burglary suspect. We'd picked him up down by the lake. Had him on possession of burglary tools, possible stolen property in his car, and even had the lab guy come down and lift some prints. Jim wasn't very impressed and after looking at what we had he told us to be sure we wrote the guy on 'driving with a suspended license.' The rest of it he thought was shit but the ticket would stick."

In this regard, the arrest process can be viewed as organizationally patterned and responsive to the sense of permission police officers feel they are granted by their sergeant. Most attempts to "explain" arrest rates in police organizations rarely look behind street encounters and, though the official depiction of street arrests (reports) are viewed in properly skeptical ways by researchers, there is little attention paid to the background expectations held by patrolmen as to what their immediate supervisors view as appropriate police actions

> "When I was one of Sergeant Bracken's boys, even God calls him Sergeant Bracken, I didn't worry so much about what I should do but worried about what Sergeant Bracken would think is the right thing to do in the situation."

Since sergeants must sign and clear all arrest reports submitted by their subordinates, it is not surprising that they have a major influence upon such arrests. "Kicking them loose" after an arrest (but before any paper is produced or departmentally processed) lies within the sergeant's discretionary domain and is a practice well est blished in police agencies. Arrest is a social process with many points of entry and, perhaps as significant, many points of exit. Whatever attention attracting activity promotes the initiation of the process is sure to he transfor.ned as the process unfolds.[13]

Arrest is, of course, one of the more dramatic (and infrequent) police production activities. Consider how the sergeant's license operates in more mundane matters. Drawing from my fieldnotes, the following events display routine occasions of a sergeant's concern.

> "We tranported the handcuffed prisoner back to the station. Hughes (the prisoner) kept up a constant stream of insults and verbal abuse: 'you cunts, bitches, cocksuckers, etc.' Both Andy and Chris seemed cool and unmoved by the invectives, neither amused nor angry. But just as we started walking into the booking room, Hughes says something about how cops are always five minutes too late and never really know what's going down. This apparently was the final straw because Andy blew up and nailed Hughes to the wall, striking him with knees, fists, and body. After picking him up by the throat and trying to choke him out, Andy throws him to the ground leaving Hughes on the floor bloodied and gasping for air. Sergeant Mead was watching the whole thing and, when its over, he winks at Andy and tells him to lighten-up. Later, in the squad room, Mead says that Andy better put something in the major (arrest report) about the incident: 'don't charge him with resisting or nothing, just say the scrote had to be forceably restrained. Say you thought he was going for your gun or something."

> "Sergeant 'Phantom' Murphy was actually seen on the street tonight. We were all having coffee at Denny's when Murphy comes in and starts telling stories. He sat around for about ten minutes and then starts wondering aloud about what the other customers might be thinking about these lazy bulls lollygagging around, drinking coffee when they ought to be out on the street

> keeping the city clean. Nobody replied directly to Murphy's comment but we all left right away. Barns said later in the car that, that was Murphy's way of kicking us out of Denny's. 'Murphy doesn't like to see his men working a coffee stop, he'd rather see them hanging around the station playing pool or watching TV like him.'"

Both incidents reflect important aspects of the work of patrol sergeants. The first incident gives license, the second takes it away. The behavioral domains are quite varied although the form of a sergeants legitimizing and sanctioning activities appear rather similar. My observations verify Rubinstein's (1973:82-3) remarks that sergeants rarely direct their men in specific encounters by command but rather rely heavily on indirect, oral, and open-ended comment or innuendo. The police culture at the squad level is a dense, high context one; a culture where members tell one another little more than is absolutely necessary and a look, a gesture, a tone of voice can be unspeakably significant. It is also a culture within which one is expected to accomplish their work without direct intervention. When pulling one's own weight is a source of pride and assessed merit, command and influence must be unobtrusive. License is neither granted nor denied categorically, it is the sense of permission (or denial) that is conveyed.

Disciplinary Protection: Among the most sensitive evaluative dimensions in use among police officers regarding their superiors is based on the protection they believe they receive from them. Sergeants are judged, in large measure, as to their willingness and ability to "back-up" their men. This is, in essense, at the core of a sergeant's transformational tasks in which he certifies as accurate certain information regarding the conduct of his men, information that flows vertically and horizontally throughout the department's disciplinary systems. Accused of "unnecessary force" by a citizen, an officer needs his sergeant to assist him in building a defensible case. Without his help, he may be lost. Sergeants, in this regard, offer favorable character references, document histories of professional conduct, provide useful accounts of specific incidents,

and have access to critical people in the department through which such information can flow. These activities are more or less expected of a sergeant although the intensity and enthusiasm with which they are pursued are known to vary on a case-by-case basis.

The sergeant is crucial in disciplinary matters primarily because he is the organizational member closest to the ground who is seen as obligated to the department by virtue of his rank yet is in possession of vital information by virtue of his presumed close contact with the men under his command. These twin assumptions are frequently wrong of course. Close contact can not be taken-for-granted since supervisory styles vary and departmental obligations may flow down rather than up since sergeants are often more indebted to their own subordinates than others in the organization for the maintenance of their current positions. Sergeants, in the course of their everyday activities, violate both the letter and spirit of numerous departmental rules and regulations. From unchecked patrol activities, outright lying, occasions of excess force, falsifying documents and covering for tardy or absent patrolmen, sergeants are indebted to their men for their silence and goodwill. The protective exchange is, from the sergeants perspective, a collective matter, not an individual one. Subordinate checks on the sergeant's petty tyrannies and control practices are possible only if taken on a squad basis. The "no-rat" ethic of patrol (and police work in general) is such that any individual who complains without the support of his peers about a sergeant's misconduct becomes a "gink", a person to be feared and kept at a distance. Consider the following incident drawn from my research in the Union City Police Department -- a pseudonym for what I consider a rather ordinary urban police agency (Van Maanen, 1978).

During roll call, one rather hated sergeant chastised an unnamed officer for writing an intradepartmental memo to the precinct captain complaining about the sergeant's notorious "mandatory car stop" policies. After the sergeant's words about "those fucking fools who think they can drive a wedge between the captain and me," a somewhat bemused veteran patrolman on his way to pick up the prowl

car for the evening shift remarked:

> "That man (the sergeant) is number one on my shitlist. But, no matter how bad he is, nobody should try to buck him on their own. We don't do things that way. You can tell him to stick it and treat him like dirt if you want to but don't ever go over his head because it won't do any good and the shit will come down all over the rest of us. You heard him tonight. He's pissed and you can bet nobody's going home early. Its like it says in the policeman's bible, if you've got the bitch, keep it to yourself and figure that it'll eventually pass. Sooner or later that bastard's either gonna be out of here or you'll find yourself in a position where you've got something on him."

Disciplinary protection is typically retrospective and incident specific but it sometimes includes matters of prospective interest. A sergeant, depending upon his social contacts between and within divisions of the department, is usually in a good position to know of forthcoming activities of direct interest to members of his squad. Of considerable interest here are the on-going activities of the Internal Investigation Division (IID). A sergeant is at times told of particular officers who are on IID's "shit list." He may then choose to pass along this information to the men involved (or to someone who he is reasonably sure will forward the information) or to keep it private. Since internal investigation processes are cloaked with mystery (some would claim a farcical mystery), a sergeant who chooses to withhold information from his men can always later claim that he was unaware of such activities. The members of the squad may not believe him but they will have no basis upon which their suspicion can be confirmed. Such information management can also work in reverse as when a man is told he is under investigation but, in reality, he is not.

Allowing IID to do its work unhindered or to use its dark and malevolent image as a motivational spur is relatively rare among sergeants. A sergeant's interest lies in keeping the men of his squad free from the attention of others in the department. And, for disciplinary tactics, he has other means at his disposal rather than seeing, as a sergeant might say, "a man hounded by the

rat patrol." Personalized and private warnings are the most frequently used devices to express displeasure.

> "Formal disciplinary action in this department is so inconsistent as to be a joke. I'll not trust the fate of one of my bulls to that system if I can avoid it ... this isn't to say I duck these problems, I merely handle them informally at my level."

Such individualized warnings and reprimands are followed closely by squad-directed comments in the hope that by making public his displeasure, the sergeant's targets may be shamed by their colleagues into addressing his worries. One sergeant made explicit use of this "wing clipping" strategy when attempting to cope with the refusal of two officers to alter, even temporarily, some of their unique report writing practices. At roll call, the sergeant lectured his men:

> "I've been getting all kinds of shit about the reports you guys have been submitting. I think they're funny, you think they're funny, but the dicks don't think they're funny. I don't have time to go over them line by line when you file them so I expect you to do things according to proper procedures. For the last time, 'cocksucker' is not an occupation; 'attitude problem' is not a chargeable offense; and 'a case of the uglies' is not a reason to stop. I'm not telling you anything you don't already know. Maybe you think its all chickenshit but from here on out you better keep this poetic license to yourselves or you'll be watching the vegtables grow down in the southend."

In this illustration, the sergeant went public with his complaints but not on an individual level and the threat to do something relatively serious to the offending officers was rather elegantly veiled. Moreover, underneath these words lie the sergeant's promise of protection, provided his men toe the line by showing discretion in their activities and responsiveness to his demands. And, as well known within police agencies, the shelter a sergeant can offer is considerable. Officers with "drinking problems," for example, can be shielded for years. Hiding spots inside the organization can always be provided for certain men who have "soured," "burned out" or "gone bad" on the street.[14] Officers who work for supervisors who aggressively thwart internal investigations by

telling IID to "not go after my men" or to "fuck off" have a formidable ally and guardian. Of course, the price officers pay for such protection may be quite steep.

Small Favors: As suggested earlier, much of a sergeant's power is based upon his control over the various small favors desired by his men. Where one works, with whom, when he work, and on what are all matters over which the sergeant can and does exercise considerable influence. The playing out of these decisions within a squad will inform a member of just where he stands in the eyes of his sergeant. Every district, shift, and sector has a reputation for good good or bad duty. Within these boundries are also good and assignments. While individual preferences vary, they vary within a fairly narrow band of acceptable assignments, outside of which there is an operating consensus as to which assignments are "choice" and which are "shit." Except for a very few officers, cars are to be preferred to walking beats, a partnership to a one-man car, a permanent assignment to a relief assignment, an active beat to a dead one. Some squads develop reputations for acquiring only those officers no other squads want. In Union City, sergeants would threaten (mostly in jest) to transfer recalcitrant officers to the so-called Goon Squad, a last-out, southend sector covering a small, almost rural, lightly populated region where it was thought only the "fuck-ups were assigned -- an assignment from which it was also believed that there was no return. Only the most uninvolved officers were unmoved by this possibility.

Small favors also include assisting an officer to make a switch to a higher status or more individually desireable police function. Career opportunities for police officers go well beyond simply moving up the hierarchy or moving into (and out of) "choice" assignments within a squad. In Union City, there are over 50 varying job assignments that can be filled by personnel at the police officer rank. Across the lateral domain, police officers have distinct prorities regarding what kinds of transfers are desireable and what

kinds are not.

This is not to suggest that all patrolmen seek, for example, to move into the detective division and become homicide dicks. They do not, but they do recognize the organizational value system that affords homicide detectives relatively high status. In terms of their own careers, however, few officers wish to remain in the patrol division indefinitely. Uniformed assignments are consider by many men (particularly older officers) as degrading and, because of the heightened vulnerability they believe uniformed assignments bring, many, if not most officers look for movement outside patrol. As a consequence, the patrol division suffers from a sifting away of its most ambitious and eager police officers. Aside from the relatively new officers, the patrol division contains within it men who express a good deal of discontent and perform at very marginal levels (see, also, Bittner, 1971:Chapter 8).

To escape the division, however, depends largely upon the willingness of a sergeant outside of patrol to request one's presence in another squad and upon the willingness of one's current sergeant to allow the move.[15] In Union City, for instance, a detective's test was administered every few years but the test itself merely certified the test taker's passing (or failing) mark and virtually all takers passed (Van Maanen, 1972:397-99). Seniority is occasionally provided (and accepted) as a legitimate reason for interdivisional transfer although seniority rules are hardly followed in any firm and fast fashion. Sergeants do not of course ruthlessly ignor the rather strongly held police convention which rewards long service. A "good patch" or "soft duty" are two of the common rewards for such service. But, the working out of this "seniority counts" code, is based upon a case-by-case evaluation. Exceptions to seniority conventions are so numerous in fact that the convention itself is more likely to be mentioned when it is honored than when it is not.

There are additional small favors available to sergeants to be used as the tokins of reciprocity. Indoor jobs, favorable performance reviews, flexible

scheduling, lengthy workbreaks, unquestioned (and unchecked) sick leaves, extended work days, holiday pay, sequential days off, permanent partnerships, congenial supervision, savvy advise, commendations for service are all worthy of mention. Any list is always expandable at the individual level for sergeants are quite aware of the personal whims and fancies that distinguish one officer from another. Patrolman Smith may be attending college and would appreciate relief work in an isolated and quiet area so that he can attend to his school work during working hours. Patrolman Jones, on the other hand, is busy refurbishing his attic and would appreciate consecutive days-off so that his home improvement project will begin to show signs of home improvement. Patrolman Connors has some pressing hospital bills and is consequently eager for all the overtime that can be made available. To know of these mundane details of a subordinates life, is to be able to finetune the small favors one has to bestow. Such practices are hardly unique to police organizations although it is perhaps the case that the police occupation itself promotes a greater intimacy and personal knowledge between supervisors and subordinates than is to be found in most organizations.[16]

Finally, although my focus in this section has been on patrol officers, there are divisional variations in the level and kind of small favors available from a sergeant. If time and money are the general favors of interest, several patterns are apparent. Time is subject to greater or lesser amounts of control depending upon a sergeant's control over the workload and workpace of subordinates. In patrol, where demands for service are to a large degree outside the sergeants bailiwick and scheduling is shift and resource based, a sergeant has relatively little leeway to increase or decrease the amounts of working time logged by a man. In the tactical squad or detective bureaus, sergeants have greater control over the workload and workpace of their men and time can therefore be used more readily as a reward for service. It was common practice

in Union City, for example, to send the entire Tac Squad home several hours early after an unusually productive work period. One of the major attractions of narcotics work in Union City was the variable and often self-regulated hours an officer could work. Money too varies systematically across the department. Traffic, because of the court time associated with extensive ticket writing, was thought to be the most lucrative division in the department. And, narcotics investigators had a reputation for substantially improving upon their base pay by virtue of being able to put in generous amounts of overtime and by having access to miscellaneous (i.e., "slush") funds. In all these areas, sergeants are not unaware of limitations but these limitations are constantly being tested and, not surprisingly, they often turn out to be elastic. There is then a political economy associated with the time and money available in the organization. It is, moreover, a political economy that sergeants have a great stake in maintaining.

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I have emphasized in the above section the power potential sergeants possess to get their bidding done. It is a potential often neglected when policing is discussed. That sergeants spend much of their resources regulating procedural matters does not mean that they have little or no control over substantive police practices. Not only is the procedural and substantive distinction misleading, it is wrong to believe that the two can be pulled apart empirically. Even trivial issues such as "keeping one's hat on while out of the patrol car" may reflect a sergeant's deeper concern for the work of his men because such issues are dealt with situationally and selectively by a sergeant. These matters often reflect concern not so much for a "hatless officer" as they do a concern for a specific hatless officer whose previous accomplishments or lack thereof may have displeased his sergeant. What stands behind seemingly mundane administrative concerns are frequently significant operational issues that go to the core of police work.

It is the case however that a sergeant's control over his men can also be easily over-estimated. There are limits on the kind and amount of information he possesses about his subordiates and subordinates can, to varying degrees, enforce these limits. Sergeants are as mobile (if not moreso) as the men they supervise. They too switch assignments and attempt to carve out a career that is satisfying to them. Since their authority is based largely on the personal ties they maintain with subordiates, this authority is not portable.[17] When transferred, a sergeant must again begin to build a base of control. One Union City patrolman regarded all sergeants as ciphers who he felt exerted little or no influence over his behavior. This man had worked for 16 different sergeants in the 4½ years he had been on the force. Also, as discussed here, sergeants display differing definitions for their work. For example, at a crude level, there are some sergeants who count and do not judge. It is as if judgements about the behavior of their officers are simply subtracted from their sense of what a supervisor is to do. The "counters" are held in high contempt by patrol officers and although the "judgers" are not always liked nor trusted, they are respected. Finally, there is the power of the squad itself to both passively withhold their efforts from a hated sergeant and actively rebel against his supervision. There are no doubt slight problems of control associated with the regime of a sergeant who complains about his slashed tires, sugered gas tank, and cut telephone line.

Comment

I have gone into considerable detail about what it is sergeants do because I believe such detail necessary to understand what a multivalent concept like productivity means to a crucial set of insiders within police agencies. In the analysis, I suggested that there is little or no agreement among patrol sergeants as to the "product" of police activity beyond that of demonstrated effort on the part of patrolmen. A good part of this dissensus rests upon the

the shifting and ambiguous nature of the police task in society and another part of it lies with the varying social practices of sergeants as to what they deem productive among their men. What doesn't vary greatly are the inside codes used by patrolmen and sergeants alike to translate raw behavior into something meaningful and significant. To "kick loose" a patrolman's hard-earned arrest is to deny autonomous behavioral license to a patrolman. To assign a man to a "cow precinct" and replace him with a mere "wannabee" (a rookie) or a "cabbage" (disinterested, usually older, officer) is to signal disgust and contempt for the officer. To put the fate of a police officer in the hands of the Internal Investigation Division if there are unofficial options at hand is to give up on a man by washing one's hands of him. These actions are of unspeakable significance to police officers for they define the reward and punishment system operating on an everyday basis within the agency. To discover and decode these practices is to bare the shared motivational base of police work. All patrolmen desire wide behavioral license, disciplinary protection, and as many small favors as they can gather. To the extent any one of these domains become collectively problematic and salient for squad members, they will withhold their efforts.

With such a conclusion in mind, what can now be said of police productivity? Three points seem particularly important. First, within police agencies and the patrol division specifically, productivity is subject to an enormous variety of interpretations. In one squad, it may be pushed as "chippies" (misdemeanor arrests); in another squad, "movers" (traffic citations); and in still another squad, "street stops" (on-view field investigations). Second, efforts to improve productivity no matter how it may be defined must depend in large measure upon the relationships sergeants maintain with their respective squads. There is considerable variance here. That these efforts must ultimately contend with the degree of behavioral license, disciplinary protection, and small favors provided by a sergeant represents a potentially massive obstacle. Third, any productivity

campaign must assume that line officers care about what sergeants have to offer. To the degree line officers do not care, they are beyond control and disenchantment and perhaps disengagement from the policeman's role is a distinct possibility. If funds allocated to police agencies continue to shrink, if the imagery surrounding the possibility (and desireability) of upwardly mobile or even lifetime horizontal police careers becomes dismal, and if the exit options expand for police officers in other organizations such as in the growing private security industry, sergeants will become objects of indifference (perhaps scorn) and left with little to do in the organization other than call roll.

These points beg a final theoretical generalization. The relations between sergeants and their men can be cast as "supportive" when seen as good by patrolmen. My use of the supportive label should not, however, he confused with the warm, interpersonal and often fuzzy use of the term within the human relations and leadership effectiveness literature. Supportive supervision for a patrolman means that one's supervisor leaves them alone a great deal of the time, attempts to get them out of whatever trouble they may find themselves in, and, passes along personalized favors whenever circumstances allow. When assuming such a stance, a sergeant is tightening a very loosely coupled system (in Weick's (1974) sense) by increasing the obligations of subordinates to his command. In organizations where the technology encourages relatively low interdependence between the ranks, control of the higher ranks over the lower ones may necessarily be predominately a result of the reciprocity such supportive relationships generate. To the extent that sergeants are granted greater monitoring capacity over their men, more official say in disciplinary matters, and additional favors to dispense (with little formality attending to such dispensations), a sergeant's sense of the productivity of his men would undoubtedly rise.

NOTES

1. This paper was written for a Symposium on "Social and Organizational Factors in Industrial, Governmental, and Military Productivity" held at the Annual Meetings of the American Psychological Association (Division 19) in Los Angeles, August 25, 1981. Helpful comments on earlier versions of some of the materials in this paper were provided by Chris Argyris, Les Berkes, Lotte Bailyn, Nigel Fielding, Peter Manning and Edgar Schein. Support for the writing was provided by: Chief of Naval Research, Psychological Sciences Division (code 452), Organizational Effectiveness Research Programs, Office of Naval Research, Arlington, Virginia, 22217; under Contract Number N00014-80-C-0905; NR 170-911.

2. Space does not permit a full (or even partial) critique of the motivation concept and its uses in organizational studies. Powerful alternatives to traditional conceptions (lay and social scientific) of motivation are to be found in Mills (1940), Peters (1958) and Lyman and Scott (1970). What these alternatives suggest is that motivation is best treated as a culturally or subculturally approved justification for behavior; of interest to an analyst when delineating normative standards of behavior and of considerably less interest to an analyst attempting to explain behavior. Inklings of fresher, more contextually attuned theories of motivation are to be glimpsed in traditional social psychology under the broad attribution theory label. See Kelley (1980) for a good review of recent trends in this area. In organization studies, the work of Salancik and Pfeffer (1977, 1978) takes some initial steps in reevaluating the role motivation ideas have played in understanding work behavior. That they fail to go far enough is perhaps less important than the doubts they raise as to the usefulness of most motivational research and theory.

3. My depiction of this "alternative approach" rests in large measure upon a point of view labelled by Rabinow and Sullivan (1979) "interpretive social science." Stopping short of materialist and instrumental assumptions of culture in favor of phenomenological and cognitive ones, interpretive theories and methods are being used with increasing frequency in organization studies. For a brief introductory statement on the premises and promises of interpretive work, see Van Maanen (1981). Masterful examples of this approach can be found in Mehan (1978), Gusfield (1980), Bosk (1979), and and Manning (1980).

4. This is an important, if obscure, philosophical point. To say meanings are practical is to say they do something. Natural language philosophers such as Wittgenstein make much of social practices as the keys unlocking various meaning systems. On productivity, an analyst committed to this perspective would examine how people ordinarily use references to productivity to accomplish certain ends as defining elements rather then try to examine any essense-like attributes of productivity itself. Fish (1979) works through some of the apparent contradictions of regarding meanings as arbitrary, inherently unconstrained and yet commonly agreed upon.

5. For materials related to the organizational characteristics of the police I have drawn extensively on Banton (1964), Bordua,(1968), Bittner (1970), Reiss (1971) and Manning (1977). The ethnographic details come largely from my own work within one large police agency which I regard for purposes here as representative of American police departments of similar size and

scope. Insofar as my descriptions are to be read as accurate and general, an interested reader can pursue for comparative purpose the exemplary ethnographic works of Westley (1970), Rubinstein (1973), Buckner (1967), and Punch (1979) among others. I have elsewhere discussed my methods in Union City (a pseudonym for the police department of study). See, Van Maanen (1978).

6. This distinction is Samuelson's (1954) and is discussed in some depth by Manning (1981). In this section, I closely follow Manning's analysis of what he calls the political-economy of policing. One important point glossed over in my text is the varied types of demand for policing. My concern in this paper is primarily upon "spontaneous demand" (arising from calls for service to the police or direct citizen requests for service) and "police generated demand" (unrequested police interventions in on-going situations such as traffic stops, narcotics investigations, crowd dispersal, etc.). Though estimates are rather crude, the vast majority of reported police activity is spent in search of and responding to these organizationally patterned "demands" (Cordner, 1979).

7. As noted later in the text, the focus of most of my attention in this paper is directed toward the patrol division of police agencies, a division to which some 55-60 percent of all sworn employees are assigned. The male pronoun is used throughout to depcit individuals within the organization since, at the moment at least, gender is hardly a variable in police organizations. The most recent study shows that the "total cities" average of female police officers is 3.5 percent (FBI, 1980:236). Changes are numerically afoot here but most of what is said in this paper about police sergeants and officers applies equally well I think to both men and women.

8. Good treatments of this perspective in organization studies are found in Silverman (1970; 1974). A good example is Bittner (1970). The general point is to view such concepts as formal structure and organizational rules relative to the way they are used by members of an organization. Organizational design and purpose are seen in this light as shifting and negotiable, always matters over which conflict is to be more or less expected.

9. See, in particular, Bittner (1970), Cain (1973), Rubinstein (1973), Chatterton (1975), and Iani and Iani (1980). Much of the materials to follow are covered in more depth and from a more general perspective in Van Maanen (forthcoming).

10. When I would ask a particular officer in Union City who he worked for, with few exceptions, he would respond with the name of his sergeant (e.g., "I'm one of Murray's Kids," "I work for Hats-On Harry, 3rd Watch Central," etc.). Conceivably, one could answer the same querry in a variety of ways (organizationally, using the police chief, divison head or department name to signify the tie; socially, using the city, union or citizens to signify the tie). I now regard this pattern as a finding somewhat surprising in light of the jealously guarded (and well studied) autonomy patrol officers are said to possess. See, Van Maanen (forthcoming).

11. A traditional qualification is on order here. What sergeants do or don't do is only a part -- perhaps a small part at that -- of the generative processes of police activity. Equal (probably more) attention must also be paid to such matters as the nature of demands for police service (and administrative strategies for coping with such demands), the local norms for police behavior, the occupational culture of policing, and so forth. I work the

supervisor-subordinate dimension in this paper, in part, because I have ignored it in much of my previous work, and, in part, because it has long been considered by theorists to be the crucial link between managerially-defined organizational goals and worker-defined organizational performance.

12. Quotes reproduced in the text come from my field notes and are only as accurate as ear and memory allow since I did not often use a tape recorder when conducting research in Union City. For a description of how I handled such verbal materials in my analysis of the police life, see Van Maanen (1979). More pertinent to the discussion in the text is the technique I used to build the description of the mobilization efforts of sergeants. Here, I followed an old-fashioned and altogether simpleminded strategy. First, I went through my field notes page by page and listed all of the things I had either seen sergeants do or had heard other people say they did. From this list, I began narrowing, grouping, and labeling the activities into shorter and shorter lists until the group of three presented here remained. This list I divined to be reducable no further. Ideally, one might want to compare my groupings with those sergeants or patrolmen might come up with. I make no claims about this being the way sergeants see their jobs. It is an analytic construction and follows a denotative logic moreso than a connotative one. As I suggest at the end of this section, any given activity covered under one of the three domains will have multiple meanings (and uses) to those in police agencies.

13. I am suggesting here that there are a number of understudied activities that occur as a "case" makes it way through the legal system. Research concentrates on the more public, dramatic and accessable aspects of the system -- arrest, charge, decisions to prosecute, plea bargaining, sentencing, etc. Prediction at any of these levels is sufficiently imprecise at present to warrant taking a closer and different kind of look at what happens to a case within criminal justice agencies. What I have in mind is paying closer attention to the languages, interests, and roles played by the various audiences to a case at each stage. A plea for such studies (and an indication of what such studies might contain) is provided by Mather and Yngvesson (forthcoming).

14. It has become trendy in the United States to speak of "police officer burn out." The phrase has no clear meaning but appears to refer to those officers who have been on the force for at least a few years and are, apparently, no longer eager to engage in police work but find the compensation and security of the job sufficient to avoid resignation. A point worth making here is simply that the number of men who respond to the "calling" of the occupation seem to be declining and the public concern for "police officer burn out" is an awkward but perhaps apt recognition of a shift in the reward base of the occupation from sacred (honor, pride, respect) to secular (money, benefits, contract).

15. Such discretion on the part of sergeants seem thus far to be spared from union pressure for a greater say in matters of police management. Perhaps because sergeants are often allowed membership in police officer unions, it has been the "mandatory transfer" policies of high administrators which have rankled union members and not the prsonalized "small favor" systems run by sergeants. Unions have even attempted to protect sergeant discretion. The current labor-management dispute in Boston regarding a proposed departmental reorganization plan involves explicit bargaining over the amount of discretion a sergeant will have over the assignment of men to his squad under the new plan (Boston Globe, November 30, 1980).

16. Such intimacy is almost overdetermined for members of police agencies faced as they are with shift work, danger, social stigma, demands for teamwork, hostile audiences, common occupational problems, low mobility, and the around-the-clock nature of the "calling." Such features almost assure the protective canopy of a strong occupational community. So strong is this community and the sense of obligations that go with one's membership, a problem for some officers is in finding ways to escape its warm, perhaps smoothering, embrace.

17. Authority is also tied to knowing the territory over which one is responsible. The territorial or turf basis of policing is a prominent theme in the patrol division where much police wisdom rests on coming to know the typical ways in which social space and time are used by citizens within one's district. Such wisdom does not transfer to other districts easily however. If clinical expertise of a sergeant is a possible source of influence beyond the positional and personal sources, sergeants new to a district will possess precious little of it. In this sense, they are dependent upon their supordinates for police wisdom regardless of the experience they may have had in other districts.

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